

## Our Study Table.

### "NOTES ON THE SHORTER CATECHISM."

There have been written scores of works to illustrate and explain the "Shorter Catechism" of the *Westminster Assembly*. Here is a new attempt by Dr. Alfred Nevin, and, we think, a very successful one. It is not expected that a reviewer must needs read such a book as this all through before forming an opinion as to its merits. We have read a good deal of it, but, as a test point, we turned to its chapter on the subject of *sin*. As things go in our day, there is no better test of a system of theology than its views of *sin*. We know what the "Shorter Catechism" says: "Sin is any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God;" which is a comprehensive, sound, and exhaustive definition. But what does Dr. Nevin say on this saying of the Westminster divines.

Dr. Nevin explains the pregnant definition above quoted under six short paragraphs:—"The law of God," "Sin defined," "Want of conformity," "Transgression," "Evil of sin," "The greatest sin." Under the head "Evil of sin," we find the following points:—Sin is evil, (1), in its origin; (2), in its nature; (3), in its aim—treason; sin is (4), a foolish thing; it is (5), a polluting thing; (6), a debasing thing; (7), an enslaving thing; (8), a painful thing; (9), a disturbing thing; (10), a fatal thing. Each of these heads is accompanied with Scripture references; and to illustrate the last paragraph, (the greatest sin), there are three pointed pithy anecdotes. Here is one of these anecdotes, (a few such-like being attached to each question in the Catechism:—

"He made out a sinner for doing nothing," said one under the conviction of sin, and who, in a revival, had been asked, "How were you awakened?" It was a new thought to the poor man, who had been comforting himself with the plea that he had done nothing very bad. But now he saw that his greatest sin was the very thing in which he had been comforting himself—*doing nothing*.

"Who lives to sin in hell his portion's given,  
Who dies to sin shall after live in heaven."